

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Lorenzi Park

other names/site number Twin Lakes, Lorenzi Lake Resort

### 2. Location

street & number 3333 W. Washington ☐ not for publication

city or town Las Vegas ☐ vicinity

state Nevada code NV county Clark code 003 zip code 89101

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the

National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the

National Register

☐ removed from the National

Register

☐ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lorenzi Park  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☐ district  
☒ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
4	20	objects
10	20	Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Outdoor recreation

Domestic: Single dwelling, hotel

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape: Park

Social: Civic

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Ranch

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof Shingles

walls Wood (railroad ties), stucco

brick, mortar

other Porch: Concrete, wooden railroad ties, brick,

mortar

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

Lorenzi Park  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Landscape Architecture

Conservation

### Period of Significance

1949-1965

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

N/A

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Nevada Historical Society

700 Twin Lakes Dr., Las Vegas, Nevada

## 10. Geographical Data

Lorenzi Park  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

**Acreage of Property** 60 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>11</u>	<u>0663163</u>	<u>4005244</u>	3	<u>11</u>	<u>0663022</u>	<u>4005549</u>
2	<u>11</u>	<u>0663048</u>	<u>4005252</u>	4	<u>11</u>	<u>0663184</u>	<u>4005498</u>

☐ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Angela Moor

organization Individual date August 2007

street & number 3913 Lighthouse Ave. telephone (702) 335-5702

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89110

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name City of Las Vegas

street & number 400 Stewart Avenue telephone (702) 229-6011

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89101

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**Lorenzi Park: Description**

Lorenzi Park is a multi-purpose city park located in heart of Las Vegas. The park is currently 59.37 acres in size and contains one lake approximately 6.29 acres in size. The property boundaries include Washington Avenue along the north, from Twin Lakes Boulevard on the western end and the western limit of K-Las Vegas commercial development on the east (approximately 670 feet west of Belrose Street), south paralleling Belrose Street, to the rear of the residential lots in the Twin Lakes Estates and Twin Lakes Village subdivisions facing Avalon Avenue, and north along Twin Lakes Drive, to the Washington Avenue intersection. These include all lands associated with Clark County Assessor's Parcel Number 139-29-301-003.<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzi Park is civic zoned. This property has undergone several phases of development since its original purchase by David G. Lorenzi in 1912, and it is necessary to trace the evolution of the landscape and its structures in order to understand its significance.

Based on the structures still extant today, the selected period of significance is 1949-1965, from the heyday of Twin Lakes Resort up to the city's purchase. The current area of historical significance on the property of today's Lorenzi Park is included within the legal boundaries of the park (see sketch map/aerial). Within this area of significance 12 contributing resources exist with several non-contributing resources. The contributing resources are as follows: four motel buildings (referred to as #1-4, respectively)<sup>2</sup>, the former St. John residence (building #5), a storage building (#6), sandstone and concrete stairs (#7), a man-made fountain (#8), a man-made lake (#9) and the islands within (#s 10, 11), and a creek (#12). Additional maps are provided in Section "Additional Documentation." The landscape resources shall be discussed separately, due to the large amount of change which has occurred over the years.

The four remaining motel buildings were originally part of eight buildings constructed for the establishment of the Twin Lakes Resort in 1949 by Lloyd St. John, the lessee of the property. The construction of the motel helped St. John market the area as dude ranch and attract visitors looking to engage in fishing, horseback riding, and other outdoors activities. They are all the same style and are nearly identical in construction and interior layout. Their style is best described as Ranch, and each one has a low-pitch, side-gabled roof with horizontal boards covering the triangular area beneath the gable. Each roof is made of pine sheeting, is shingled, and contains a small attic beneath it. These buildings are all single-story units with long, rectangular frames. The foundations are cement, and railroad ties from the Tonopah Railroad (dismantled in 1918) make up a large part of the framing, as well as the interior and exterior walls (which are ties covered with stucco). Each building contained six single front doors, as well as six double-pane, metal casement windows, since each was a six-unit motel structure. The front exterior wall is made of masonry blocks held together with "weeping mortar." All motel buildings also have a porch overhang which is supported by three masonry block posts each (also with weeping mortar), plus six railroad tie supports per porch.<sup>3</sup> The motel units also had rear doors and small windows, which only remain today on building #4. Each one also contained brick fireplaces (typically in 2 of the 6 units), most of which are extant today.

In addition to reviving the former lake resort as a dude ranch, St. John constructed a home on the property. Identified as building #5, it was built in 1957 and is a modern style house with a shed

<sup>1</sup> Clark County Assessors Office, Clark County Real Property Report 139-29-301-003.

<sup>2</sup> Building #1 one on the sketch map was originally two buildings that have been joined together.

<sup>3</sup> See photo #5.

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roof, and the rest of its construction and materials are equivalent to those of the motel buildings.<sup>4</sup> A stone planter exists on the eastern end of the house, as well as a stone fireplace unit in the living room.<sup>5</sup> The house contains a number of large double-pane windows, especially on the south side that faces the lake. The interior ceiling above the living room and dining areas is slightly vaulted with exposed wood beams. Large spherical light fixtures hang from the highest part of the vault.<sup>6</sup>

In 1952 and 1953, St. John completed a boathouse and garage on the west side of the north lake. The structure had a small sleeping area partitioned off in the southeast corner. It is still standing in the park and is referred to as building #6 in this document. It has a hipped, shingled roof. Most of the exterior of the structure is also made of masonry blocks with weeping mortar, and it visually matches the other extant structures in the area of significance. The northern end of the building contains two large metal garage doors.<sup>7</sup>

Since the city took ownership of the property, they made many changes to the buildings. The interiors saw the most alterations in order to better serve various community groups. The city only slightly changed the exterior of the buildings. Motel building #1 was formerly two separate motel units, but a linking addition was created to join the buildings together when the Las Vegas Art Museum moved into them in 1974. All of the interior unit-dividing walls were removed to create a large, open gallery space. Two fireplace units (which contain two back-to-back fireplaces, formerly separated by a wall so as to serve two separate rooms) remain, one at the southern end and one at the northern end of the building. The southernmost bathroom was kept intact, but the others were cleared of their porcelain appliances and made into storage closets. A snack area and office spaces were added to the interior as well, all of which served the Museum's purposes. Most of the interior walls were covered with pegboard, which was used for hanging gallery exhibits. All of the motel units' rear doors and windows were closed off and plastered over. The Museum occupied this space until 1997, when they moved to a new location.<sup>8</sup> As of today, the entire exterior of the structure (including porch posts) has been painted a reddish-brown. Building #1 is currently used as a center for handicapped individuals.

Motel building #2 was also acquired by the Las Vegas Art Museum, and it was converted into a storage space and a classroom building (for art classes). One interior wall was removed, but the fireplace units and other interior structural features appear intact. The number of intact restrooms from the former units is questionable. The building's rear doors and windows were also removed and plastered over, but front doors and windows remain. This building's exterior is also painted reddish-brown today and is still used for a variety of classes for senior centers.

Motel building #3 had an identical interior layout to #2, but was altered in a different way. The two southernmost interior walls remain, but the rest have been removed.<sup>9</sup> The rooms still divided by these walls serve as offices for the senior center which currently occupies the structure. The fireplace units and the restrooms located at the center of the building remain intact. The northern end of the building was converted into a kitchen, dining, and relaxation area for the senior center. One window on the north end of the building remains. All rear doors and windows on this structure were also removed and plastered over, but all front doors and windows remain. Just like the others, the exterior of this structure has been painted the reddish-brown.

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<sup>4</sup> See photo #7.

<sup>5</sup> See photo pages #11.

<sup>6</sup> See photo pages #12.

<sup>7</sup> See floor plan in the additional documents.

<sup>8</sup> Las Vegas Art Museum. "About the Las Vegas Art Museum," Las Vegas Art Museum.

<http://www.lasvegasartmuseum.org/history.htm> (accessed 05 May, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> See plan in the additional documents.

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Motel building #4 is the only one of the remaining motel structures to still have most of its rear doors and windows intact, although many of the windows are boarded.<sup>10</sup> The front doors and windows remain intact as well, located on the south, lake-facing side. The structural state of the interior is unknown. This building is currently used as the recreational part of the adaptive use center for handicapped individuals, so a chain-link fence has been built around the perimeter of the front porch. Again, the building's entire exterior is painted reddish-brown.

Building #5, the former St. John residence, is the best-preserved structurally of all the extant buildings.<sup>11</sup> The most noticeable change is at the eastern end of the building, where the formerly open carport area was walled in to create an office space inside. The stone planter built at the edge of the carport that supports the roof remains intact, and can be seen from both inside and outside the new wall.<sup>12</sup> With the exception of the door and window added to the office in the carport area, the other doors and windows on the building appear to be in their original placements. All windows are now barred for security purposes. Within the building, the structure of all the walls and divisions remain the same, with the stone fireplace intact. The wall that divided the two bedrooms in the northwest corner of the house has been removed, creating a large, open office space. The bedroom closest to the home's main entrance (part of this office space) is now entered from the living room area; the former hall entrance has been closed off. All bedrooms in the house are now used as offices which serve as the administrative area for the adaptive use center. The kitchen maintains its original layout, and the wooden drawers and cabinets appear original as well.<sup>13</sup> The storage area on the east end of the house is now part of the office in the carport area. The exterior has been painted the same color as the other extant buildings. Aside from these changes, the building is very much original and appears to be in good condition, and could be easily restored.

Building #6 is being used for storage purposes, and public restrooms now occupy the southern end of the structure. The two garage doors at the northern end of the building remain in place. The building currently houses maintenance equipment. Interior structural details are unknown, due to lack of public access to parts of the building aside from the bathrooms. It is likely that the sleeping room in the southeastern corner of the building is now used for storage as well, since no one now resides in this structure. For purposes of continuity, this building has also been painted the reddish-brown of the other extant structures.

The non-contributing architectural resources within the area of significance include:

- The Nevada State Museum and Historical Society building
- Sammy Davis Junior Festival Pavilion
- Nevada Garden Club Center

In terms of contributing landscape resources within the area of significance, the lake (#9) is clearly the most important one. As mentioned earlier, there were two lakes, but the city removed the dividing isthmus to create one lake in the early 1990s. This alteration reduced the amount of lake by about half. Based on rough measurements, the north lake lost approximately 25 feet of length, 93 feet of width from the north end, and about 59 feet of width on its south end. The south lake lost approximately 70 feet of length, around 94 feet of width at the east end, and about 104 feet of width at the west end. The lake continues to be used for fishing, but no other activities are permitted.

The original islands (#10, 11) remain in place, but they too have been altered in size. The island in the former north lake appears to be close to its original size, but as mentioned earlier, the city

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<sup>10</sup> See photo #17.

<sup>11</sup> See in the additional documents.

<sup>12</sup> See photo #9.

<sup>13</sup> See photos #13 and 14.

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demolished the island house, and a portion of the island was removed along with it. The vegetation on this island appears original, including honeysuckle, oleander, and a wide variety of other trees and shrubs.<sup>14</sup> The island in the former south lake is considerably smaller in size. Lorenzi's band shell once sat on this island, but today's island is far too small to hold any structures. Despite the large-scale alterations made to the lakes, today's lake and islands remain highly significant.<sup>15</sup>

The other water-related contributing resource is a small creek (#12), which trickles from a stone fountain located in the grassy area between motel buildings 1, 2, and 3. Photo evidence and maps indicate that it has been on the property since at least the construction of the motel.<sup>16</sup> The main difference today is that the creek no longer flows into the north lake.

The remaining motel buildings and the lakes retain their integrity despite alterations after the city turned the site into the park. All are located on their original sites. The most notable change, the reduction in size and the joining of the two lakes, does not alter their significance enough to make them lose their integrity. The exterior of the motel buildings and the St. John residence remain largely unchanged and could easily be restored to their original appearance by repainting them. While the interiors underwent significant alteration the layout of the motel is still visible. In addition, the layout of the motel in relation to the lakes with the creek running between them remains intact highlighting the relationship of the motel and the lakes. The materials used in the construction also enhance the significance of the property, especially the usage of railroad ties from the Tonopah railroad. These buildings with their unique architectural style and usage of old railroad ties tie together the past of this one-time railroad stop with its mid-century use as a dude ranch and resort for visitors. This marks an important transition for Las Vegas from a railroad stop into the modern tourist destination it became by the late twentieth century. The motel buildings and the remaining landscape features are all that remain of one early Las Vegas' most important resorts.

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<sup>14</sup> See photos #15 and 16.

<sup>15</sup> For current lake view, see photo #15.

<sup>16</sup> The map from the 1964 appraisal includes the creek.



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**List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources (please refer to sketch/aerial map for location of numbered resources):**

**Contributing Architectural elements referenced on map:**

- Original Motel buildings (#1-4 on map). Five buildings remain, though two have been combined for four total structures. Three of the buildings are being used for the Derfelt Senior center and one for the Adaptive Recreation program.
- St. John Residence (#5 on map). This building houses the NEW Age program. It has metal bars on the windows and is surrounded by a chain link fence.
- Garage/storage (original boathouse) (#6 on map). This building now houses storage and restrooms.
- Stair Ruins (#7 on map). These are remains of three staircases constructed of sandstone slabs and concrete that went up the ridge to motel buildings along Twin Lakes Drive.
- Fountain (#8 on map). This fountain is constructed out of rocks and concrete and was located originally at the northwest edge of the fishpond that has now been covered with a parking lot.

**Contributing Landscape elements referenced on map:**

- Lorenzi Lake (#9 on map). Formally two lakes, the isthmus separating them was removed to create one larger lake. They were also reduced in size, but the combined lake maintains the same over all shape.
- North Island (#10 on map). This island was reduced in size when the lakes were combined.
- South Island (#11 on map). This island was reduced in size when the lakes were combined.
- Creek (#12 on map). The original creek that ran through the motel structures still exists though it has been paved over at points. The original path remains.

**Non-Contributing Architectural elements referenced on map:**

- Nevada State Museum (#13 on map).
- Sammy Davis Pavilion (#14 on map).
- Nevada Garden Club center (#15 on map).
- Water tank (#16 on map).
- Shed (#17 on map).
- Shaded pavilion at southeast end of lake (#18 on map).
- Dog Run (#21 on map).

**Non-Contributing Architectural elements not referenced on map:**

- Shaded picnic tables (11 total).
- Shaded benches (5 total).
- Footbridge near south edge of lake (located between Sammy Davis Pavillion and Nevada State Museum).
- Two footbridges over creek (between buildings #1 and #2 on sketch map).
- Fountain at creek head (located at #12 on map).
- Exercise area at Derfelt Senior Center (located north of #2 on map).
- Shuffleboard at Derfelt Senior Center (located north of #2 on map).
- Diamond Jubilee/Architect's Wives League Plaque from 1980 (directly east of #1 on map).
- Shed at St. John Residence (located behind #5 on map).
- Dock at North shore of lake (located behind #4 on map).
- Wooden dock on south island (located at #11 on map).
- Bust of David Lorenzi (located along path at the east side of the lake).
- Clock tower (located along path at east side of the lake).

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- Chain link fence around motel building and St. John Residence (building #s 4 and 5 on map).
- Playground (located in the south east part of the park).
- Restroom building (on the east side of the lake).
- Sign for Pioneer Trail (located at the entrance off Twin Lakes Dr.).
- Numerous signs related to current functions.
- Fence around the creek.
- Handicap accessibility ramp leading into the front (north facing side) of the St. John residence (St. John Residence is #5 on map).

**Non-Contributing Landscape elements referenced on map:**

- Rose garden (#19 on map).
- Garden area with gazebo (#20 on map).

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**Statement of Significance**

The area known today as Lorenzi Park has been a site of importance throughout Las Vegas history. It served as a site of recreation and entertainment for visitors and residents alike. The addition of a motel to the site in 1949 linked the site to the larger histories of dude ranching and divorce in Nevada. The motel played an important role as divorce seekers obtained their needed residency at the motel. The motel also hosted visitors from around the country seeking a real "Western" experience offering horseback riding, rodeo events, fishing, and authentic food. Finally, scientists working at the Nevada Test Site called the motel home when housing was scarce in the city. The remaining motel buildings and the continued fishing in the two lakes create an important glimpse of the past and will allow for an interpretable site. The development of the Twin Lakes Lodge and the namesake lakes help illustrate the trajectory of history in Las Vegas. The property is significant on the local level in the areas of recreation and tourism.

**Early History**

Lorenzi Park, located close to the Las Vegas Springs Preserve, has many connections to that important site. David Lorenzi bought the land in 1912 because of its lush landscape and its small spring, part of the same system as at the Las Vegas Springs. The area that Lorenzi identified as a site of possibility had a long past as an agricultural site for Native Americans and served as a stopping-place during westward expansion.

The availability of water determined the early history of southern Nevada. Springs around the valley provided much needed water for vegetation and people.<sup>17</sup> The area around Lorenzi's acres was a site of plentiful water in the arid valley. Springs and creeks provided moisture that attracted people and plant life. The site of the current park contained a small spring. Lorenzi used his water to irrigate his property for crops, and later to fill his lake and his pond.<sup>18</sup> Water played an important role at the park throughout its history as early residents flocked to the lakes and pool to escape the blazing summer heat before air conditioning came to the valley.

The history of Native Americans at Lorenzi Park was lost to treasure-hunting early visitors to the park. Louise Lorenzi recounted in a history of her father's land the Indian site he found while developing it.<sup>19</sup> A 1937 story about Lorenzi recounted the Indian artifacts found on the property including, "many ancient relics of lost Indian civilization, consisting of craftily fashioned arrowheads, crude stone mortar and pestles, awkward farm implements, and fragments of pottery."<sup>20</sup> Early inhabitants of the area likely included Anasazi and southern Paiutes.<sup>21</sup>

The area near Lorenzi Park attracted travelers as a resting point for emigrants going west. Situated along the Spanish Trail and the later Mormon Road, travelers often stopped along the way to

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<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Von Till Warren, "The History of Las Vegas Springs, a Disappeared Resource," (PhD dis., Washington State University, 2001), 20.

<sup>18</sup> Warren, 54-55.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>20</sup> Horace Arthur Mann, "The Legend of Lorenzi Lake, Las Vegas, Nevada." July 22, 1937.

<sup>21</sup> Warren, 55.

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California to rest and replenish their water supplies. Among the first men to travel west from Santa Fe Frs. Escalante and Dominguez helped establish the Spanish Trail.<sup>22</sup> The first non-Native American to visit the springs was likely Raphael Rivera, part of Antonio Armijo's 1829 expedition.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the most important early visitor to the area was John C. Fremont who literally put Las Vegas on the map. In 1844, Fremont and his party saw the Las Vegas Spring.<sup>24</sup>

By the 1840s, immigrants and pioneers traveled on the trails west established by early explorers.<sup>25</sup> Southern Nevada attracted its first Anglo permanent residents soon thereafter. First, Brigham Young established the Mormon Fort (located just a few miles from Lorenzi Park) to expand the territory of the Mormon Church.<sup>26</sup> In May of 1855, a group of thirty men arrived in Las Vegas and took up the task of building a fort.<sup>27</sup> The Mormons completed their fort and remained in the valley until 1858, when Young called them back to Utah to fight in the Mormon War.<sup>28</sup> The next Anglo settlers arrived in the valley following mining discoveries at Mount Potosi and El Dorado Canyon near present-day Lake Mead.<sup>29</sup> One of the most important early settlers, Octavius Decatur Gass took over the old Mormon Fort in 1865 and established "Las Vegas Ranch."<sup>30</sup> Gass, an entrepreneur, provided lodging and fresh food to travelers and early residents.<sup>31</sup> By the late 1870s, he owned most of the property in the valley and all the water rights.<sup>32</sup> After defaulting on a loan to his neighbor, Archibald Stewart in 1880, Gass lost his property and the Stewarts took it over.<sup>33</sup> After Archibald Stewart's death in 1884, his wife, Helen Stewart maintained their property until 1902 when she sold their 2000 acres to William Clark, senator from Montana.<sup>34</sup>

Clark won the contract from the Union Pacific railroad to extend the railroad through southern Nevada.<sup>35</sup> During the construction of the railroad, Las Vegas became the site of many speculative business ventures, including the McWilliams town site on what is now West Las Vegas.<sup>36</sup> Following the auction of lots by the railroad in May 1905, Las Vegas enjoyed growth and prosperity.<sup>37</sup>

**David Gerland Lorenzi**

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<sup>22</sup> James W. Hulse, *The Silver State: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991) 34. and Fred N. Fletcher, *Early Nevada: The Period of Exploration, 1776-1848* (Reno: A. Carlisle & Co., 1929) 11.

<sup>23</sup> Elbert B. Edwards, *Two Hundred Years in Nevada: a Story of People Who Opened, Explored, and Developed the Land: a History* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press and Mountain State Bindery, 1978) 44-5.

<sup>24</sup> Edwards, 71.

<sup>25</sup> Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-2000, 2nd ed.* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000) 1.

<sup>26</sup> Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Stanley W. Paher and Roy E. Purcell, *Las Vegas: As it Began--as it Grew* (Las Vegas: Nevada Publications, 1971) 35.

<sup>31</sup> Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Paher, 37-8.

<sup>33</sup> Paher, 55.

<sup>34</sup> Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. And Paher, 70.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-7.

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Born in 1874 in France, David G. Lorenzi first visited the United States as a youth.<sup>38</sup> He returned to the United States sometime after the turn of the century and spent time traveling the nation. After contracting tuberculosis, Lorenzi moved west and in San Diego met E.B. Moore, his future father-in-law.<sup>39</sup> After Moore introduced Lorenzi to the possibilities of mining in Arizona, Lorenzi tried his hand at mining for some time.<sup>40</sup> Following his short career as a miner, Lorenzi relocated to the young city of Las Vegas in 1911.<sup>41</sup>

Legend holds that Lorenzi spotted his future ranch from the window of the train as he rode into Las Vegas. He "saw an area where green trees and shrubs attested to the presence of water in the otherwise barren desert."<sup>42</sup> Convinced that any land so lush and green had a ready and available water supply, in 1912 Lorenzi purchased the eighty-acre section of land located about two miles from the original town site.<sup>43</sup> His original intentions were to cultivate the land and grow fruit and create a vineyard with grape vines already growing on the property.<sup>44</sup> Soon after arriving in Las Vegas and purchasing his ranch, Lorenzi opened a confectionary store downtown. His store, the Palms, sold candies and other desserts as well as light meals.<sup>45</sup> Lorenzi's first daughter, Louise, was born in 1913.<sup>46</sup>

In 1914, the *Las Vegas Age* reported the finding of a well on Lorenzi's property. The well was "260 feet deep and the flow is estimated about 14 inches," and "all concerned are accordingly happy."<sup>47</sup> Lorenzi maintained his store and during World War I converted it into the first cash and carry grocery in Las Vegas.<sup>48</sup> Despite the success of his store, Lorenzi also kept busy working at his ranch. He grew fruit in orchards and sold it throughout Las Vegas. He also began to dig out two man-made lakes on his property, giving the land its future name of Twin Lakes. In 1920, following the closing of the Palms, Lorenzi decided to run as an independent for County Commission on his strengths as a businessman.<sup>49</sup> His bid was unsuccessful but Lorenzi became well known in the nascent city.

The first of Lorenzi's lakes was completed in 1921 and the second one completed the following year.<sup>50</sup> Each lake contained an island that offered additional space for entertainment at Lorenzi's site. One island held a clubhouse and the other a bandshell and a screen where Lorenzi showed movies.<sup>51</sup> Lorenzi's property, despite the development of the lakes and other amenities on it, continued to be used

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<sup>38</sup> K.J. Evans, "David G. Lorenzi," in *The First 100: Portraits of the Men and Women Who Shaped Las Vegas*, ed. A.D. Hopkins and K.J. Evans (Las Vegas: Huntington Press, 1999) 69-71. Sources date his birth anywhere from 1874 to 1877.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Horace Arthur Mann, "The Legend of Lorenzi Lake," Nevada State Museum & Historical Society, July 22, 1937.

<sup>41</sup> Louise Lorenzi Fountain, interview, 13 February 1967.

<sup>42</sup> Hank Greenspun, "Where I Stand," *Las Vegas Sun*, 7 March 1966.

<sup>43</sup> Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005) 51, and Corke Pepper, "The Story of Twin Lakes," *Las Vegas Sun*, 15 April 1962.

<sup>44</sup> Evans, "David G. Lorenzi," *The First 100: Portraits of the Men and Women Who Shaped Las Vegas*.

<sup>45</sup> 2 August 1913, LV Age.

<sup>46</sup> Louise Lorenzi Fountain, interview, 13 February 1967.

<sup>47</sup> "Another Fine Well," *Las Vegas Age*, 10 January, 1914.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "Thanks," *Las Vegas Age*, 10 April 1920, and "Lorenzi Independent Out for Commissioner," *Las Vegas Age*, 21 August 1920.

<sup>50</sup> "Twin Lakes Lodge, Lorenzi Park Historic Marker Ceremony," Pamphlet. 12 October 1980.

<sup>51</sup> Evans, "David G. Lorenzi," *The First 100: Portraits of the Men and Women Who Shaped Las Vegas*.

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for farming and other things. In 1924, Lorenzi reentered the business world with the opening of the Home Ice Company on his property. The Home Ice Company used two wagons to deliver six tons of ice made from Lorenzi's "pure artesian water" per day to customers in Las Vegas.<sup>52</sup>

The official grand opening of Lorenzi's Lake Park came in 1926 as he completed a pool and dance pavilion. That year the City of Las Vegas hosted its official Fourth of July celebration at Lorenzi's.<sup>53</sup> The *Las Vegas Age* lauded Lorenzi's efforts in an article titled, "Lorenzi Ranch Will Be Recreation Center." The author wrote, "Mr. Lorenzi should be commended for his forethought in providing our people with this beautiful pleasure ground which will add infinitely to our comfort during the summer months."<sup>54</sup>

The popularity of Lorenzi's site continued throughout the rest of the decade and into the 1930s. It hosted a celebration when President Franklin Roosevelt signed the bill authorizing the construction of Boulder Dam.<sup>55</sup> Throughout the construction of the Dam, workers trekked from Boulder City to Lorenzi's park on the weekends for the dancing, boating, and swimming Lorenzi offered his patrons.<sup>56</sup> Lorenzi continued to add to his attractions and in 1929 built a dog racetrack.<sup>57</sup>

The year 1931 was an exciting one in Nevada history. State lawmakers legalized gaming and relaxed residency requirements for divorce seekers. Both of these important trends in Nevada history changes played out at Lorenzi's site. Following the legalization of gaming, the lessees of Lorenzi's ranch applied for a gaming license."<sup>58</sup> After the city denied them a license, their case went to the Nevada Supreme Court and they were awarded a gaming license. Gaming at Lorenzi's resort was short-lived, however, with the casino open for just one month.<sup>59</sup> At the same time as the lessees were fighting for their gaming license, "a large brewery was uncovered with 2,500 gallons of beer, located in the building used to house the ice manufacturing plant." Lorenzi did not face any charges since he had leased the property out.<sup>60</sup> Lorenzi's Lake Park continued the tradition of spectacular Fourth of July celebrations that began in 1926 throughout the 1930s. Improvements continued at the resort and in 1932, Lorenzi began construction on a dining room.<sup>61</sup> The resort continued to host locals and visitors who enjoyed the pool and lakes on hot summer days and went for dining and dancing on summer evenings.

Lorenzi's shrewd business sense led him to continually seek to improve his property. In 1935, the local paper revealed plans for a one million dollar dude ranch at the site. Lorenzi, after returning from a Los Angeles meeting, detailed the plans which called for a lodge with forty rooms at a cost of \$250,000, bungalows, and a golf course. The *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* quoted Lorenzi, "The plan is to build a first class resort to take advantage of the divorce trade and tourists who may demand that type of accommodation."<sup>62</sup> The next day the newspaper carried an editorial in favor of the

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<sup>52</sup> "Home Ice Company is Now Doing Business," *Las Vegas Age*, 16 August 1924.

<sup>53</sup> "Las Vegas to Celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup> at Lorenzi Lake," *Las Vegas Age*, 12 June 1926.

<sup>54</sup> "Lorenzi Ranch Will Be Recreation Center," *Las Vegas Age*, 13 March 1926.

<sup>55</sup> "Lorenzi's was Popular Resort," *Las Vegas Review-Journal (Special Anniversary Edition)*, May 1955.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> "Foundation Is Completed for Dog Race Track," *Las Vegas Age*, 6 August 1929.

<sup>58</sup> David Millman, "Lorenzi Park: A Social, Cultural, and Service Center of Las Vegas," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 26, no. 3 (1983): 191-193.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 191-193.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>61</sup> "Dance Pavilion at Lorenzi Park to Reopen," *Las Vegas Age*, 13 March 1932.

<sup>62</sup> "1,000,000 Dude Ranch at Lorenzi's," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 25 July 1935.

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dude ranch plan saying, "such a project is a vital necessity to the continued growth and development of this community" and "Las Vegas needs a resort of this kind as much as the owners will need Las Vegas."<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, Lorenzi's ambitious plan never came to fruition, and the following year he sold it to a California land developer, W.E. Alexander. The new owner also planned to develop a dude ranch with "De Luxe" units to compete with and, eventually surpass, Palm Springs as a desert recreation site.<sup>64</sup> Alexander left Las Vegas without explanation just two months after taking ownership and Lorenzi once again took over the resort, and opened it for the 1936 season.<sup>65</sup>

Lorenzi once again tried to sell his property in 1937, first offering it to the city of Las Vegas. He offered his eighty acres to the city for \$70,000 payable in municipal bonds. He included a list of improvements he made to the land, including three wells, two lakes and islands, a fishpond, two houses, two cottages, a pavilion, swimming pool, orchard and vineyard, pipelines, and sewer and electrical lines. Lorenzi estimated his investment at \$111,300.<sup>66</sup> An editorial in the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* urged the purchase saying it was "well worth considering." It goes on to say that "one day we will be a community of 50,000 souls" and "the Lorenzi holdings would make an excellent site" for a park. He goes on to argue that Lorenzi's land would make an ideal site for a "GOOD municipal golf course" and that the water rights alone make it a worthwhile purchase.<sup>67</sup> The City Commission heard Lorenzi's offer at their August 11, 1937 meeting and finance commissioner, Joe Ronnow, said, "I feel that we should give serious consideration to this proposition, as Mr. Lorenzi is giving the city preference, and if it is sold to a large corporation, we will have no further opportunity to buy it."<sup>68</sup> The City passed on the resort and in 1938 an option to purchase the land by Thomas Sharp was recorded.<sup>69</sup>

**Twin Lakes**

Thomas Sharp and David Lorenzi completed the sale of the eighty acres in June of 1940 at a price of \$59,000.<sup>70</sup> Little was known about Sharp's intentions at the time of the purchase and the papers speculated that he wanted to use it as a private residence.<sup>71</sup> In 1941, the park reopened to the public as the "Twin Lakes Farm."<sup>72</sup> For the first few years, Sharp kept most of the property and the pool open to the public. In 1945, he attempted to lease the pool to the city, but city officials balked at the restrictions Sharp placed on the lease.<sup>73</sup> In 1945, just five years after Sharp bought the property the

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<sup>63</sup> "That Lorenzi Resort Project," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 26 July 1935.

<sup>64</sup> "Big Dude Ranch Is Said Assured at Lorenzi Park By Californians," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 7 February 1936.

<sup>65</sup> "Dude Rancher Departs," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 18 April 1936 and "Lorenzi Resort to Open on June 6," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 21 May 1936.

<sup>66</sup> "Lorenzi Offers Resort to City Board for Park," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 16 July 1937.

<sup>67</sup> "Well Worth Considering," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 16 July 1937.

<sup>68</sup> "Lorenzi Urges City to Buy Park," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 12 August 1937.

<sup>69</sup> "Option on Lorenzi Resort is Reported," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 20 August 1938.

<sup>70</sup> The initial agreement was for one year, but in 1939 the option was extended for one additional year until 1940. "Lorenzi Extends Option on Resort," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 29 July 1939, and "Lorenzi Park Sold to San Diego Man," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 29 June 1940. Also Clark County Record no. 27.93586, Deed of Trust, 20 June 1940.

<sup>71</sup> "Lorenzi Park Sold to San Diego Man," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 29 June 1940.

<sup>72</sup> Advertisement, *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 24 May 1941.

<sup>73</sup> "Swimming Pool Lease is Tabled, Riders Balk," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* 7 Feb 1945.

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first of several corporations took over the operation of the resort. The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported that a Las Vegas group was looking to develop the site "into one of the foremost amusement spots in the West."<sup>74</sup> Thomas Sharp retained ownership of the acreage and applied for water permits the next year.<sup>75</sup> In 1947, the Twin Lakes Corporation began leasing the property. The lease called for monthly payments of \$750 dollars to Sharp.<sup>76</sup> By the close of the 1940s, the transformation of Lorenzi's ranch into a functioning resort was complete. In 1949, a 48-unit motel located in the northwest corner opened and the city opened a golf course nearby, adding to Twin Lakes' appeal.<sup>77</sup>

In the 1950s, Twin Lakes continued to prosper as a popular resort and recreation site for the growing city of Las Vegas. Lloyd St. John took over operations of Twin Lakes for the Twin Lakes Corporation. Growth and development continued at the resort with Lloyd St. John appealing to the zoning board to have part of the property reclassified so that he could build apartments on the "high ground overlooking the resort."<sup>78</sup> In the first half of the decade, Twin Lakes hosted scientists and their families working at the Nevada Test Site.<sup>79</sup> Celebrities including Wally Cox, Carol Channing, and George Gobel stayed at the lodge.<sup>80</sup> St. John and the Twin Lakes Corporation maintained the resort and it underwent renovations and improvements under his lead. In 1955, new dressing rooms, a sun deck, and restaurant greeted visitors.<sup>81</sup> Tex and Freda Gates, owners of the Hotel Last Frontier moved their riding stables to Twin Lakes.<sup>82</sup> By the mid-1950s, Twin Lakes had a complete rodeo arena and hosted a variety of rodeo events, but the most popular was a local "Little Wrangler" rodeo.<sup>83</sup>

The Twin Lakes Corporation and Thomas Sharp negotiated a new lease in 1957. The lease agreement contained a provision that if Sharp died within five years of the agreement the property could be purchased by the lessees for an agreed upon price.<sup>84</sup> The Twin Lakes Corporation collaborated with Jack Wrather of Los Angeles in 1957.<sup>85</sup> Wrather was an experienced hotelier and built the original Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. Despite changes in ownership and lease agreements, Lloyd St. John continued his management of the resort.

As the 1950s drew to a close Twin Lakes flourished as a year-round resort and played host to the growing number of conventioners visiting Las Vegas. It began branding itself as "The Oasis of

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<sup>74</sup> "Twin Lakes Resort Sold," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* 26 February 1945. While the article asserts the resort was sold, no county records show the sale and maintain Thomas Sharp as owner. In all likelihood, Sharp extended a lease to a Las Vegas group.

<sup>75</sup> "Notice of Application for Permission to Change the Point of Diversion of the Public Waters of the State of Nevada," *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, 14 May 1946.

<sup>76</sup> Mel Anderson and Ben Stanton. "Appraisal of Twin Lakes Resort for City of Las Vegas, Nevada," Anderson-Stanton Co.: 1964.

<sup>77</sup> Millman, 193 and City of Las Vegas website, [http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Find/parks\\_facilities.asp?ID=5090#](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Find/parks_facilities.asp?ID=5090#), last accessed 22 August 2007.

<sup>78</sup> "Development of Twin Lakes Seen," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 7 February 1951.

<sup>79</sup> Millman, 194.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. and "Twin Lakes Lodge, Lorenzi Park Historic Marker Ceremony," Pamphlet, 12 October 1980.

<sup>81</sup> Advertisement. "Twin Lakes Lodge," date unknown.

<sup>82</sup> "Lorenzi's was Popular Resort," *Las Vegas Review-Journal (Special Anniversary Edition)*, May 1955.

<sup>83</sup> Corke Pepper, "The Story of Twin Lakes," *Las Vegas Sun*, 15 April 1962.

<sup>84</sup> Clark County Recorder's Document no. 376.303867, Administrator's Deed, 20 July 1962. The price was set at \$225,000 if a new building was completed and \$200,000 if the new dwelling was not constructed by the time of his death.

<sup>85</sup> Clark County Recorder's Document no. 376.303866, Assignment of Lease and Lease Agreement, 17 July 1962, and *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/WW/fwr18.html> (accessed 31 August 2007).



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Las Vegas” and room rates ranged from six to twelve dollars a night.<sup>86</sup> Publicity material from the Lodge emphasized the Western character of the resort. Stagecoach rides, horseback riding, fishing, and boating were favored activities at the Resort. The resort also continued as a site of entertainment. Twin Lakes hosted celebrities such as Bobby Darrin and Wayne Newton as entertainment acts at the Lodge.<sup>87</sup>

From 1949 through the late 1950s, Twin Lakes played an important part in the development of tourism Las Vegas. Beginning as a dude ranch with a modest hotel, the resort first attracted visitors looking to have an authentic western experience. As Las Vegas began to mature as a resort destination with the construction of the first resorts on what came to be known as the Las Vegas Strip, Twin Lakes reinvented itself as a getaway for visitors and offered daytime excursions to the property. It also skillfully partnered with the Last Frontier when it housed the stables of the hotel. Looking at the history of Twin Lakes during this period offers an important glimpse into the larger histories of the growth of tourism in southern Nevada and the growth of Las Vegas following World War II.

In 1959, Thomas Sharp passed away and the Twin Lakes Corporation initiated the sale of the resort invoking the rider in the 1959 lease. The sale was completed in 1962 for a total of \$200,000. Following the sale, the original eighty acres that Lorenzi purchased in 1912 was divided in half, with one half continuing to be known as Twin Lakes and the other forty acres that bordered the Tonopah Highway (today’s Rancho Drive) known as the “Lower Forty.” Lloyd St. John assumed ownership of the Twin Lakes portion, while the other forty acres passed through a series of corporate owners, eventually winding up in the possession of Edward Levinson and Ed Torres, the president and vice-president of the Fremont Hotel.<sup>88</sup>

Residents of Las Vegas, as they had done in 1937 when Lorenzi offered his land to the city for \$70,000, pressed Las Vegas officials to purchase Twin Lakes for the benefit of the city. Beginning in 1963, the city, Lloyd St. John, and Las Vegasans debated what should happen to the lodge. Residents presented a petition to the Las Vegas City Commission in 1963 signed by 150 people urging the purchase of Twin Lakes and its surrounding forty acres. The commission refused because the owner was seeking more than one million for the property, well more than its worth in their estimation.<sup>89</sup> A September 1964 document by St. John detailed his asking price and called on the public to “take direct action if they wish to preserve Twin Lakes.” He wrote, “If Twin Lakes is lost, it can never be duplicated.”<sup>90</sup> At the end of 1964, the city began showing interest in Twin Lakes and hired appraisers from Arizona to appraise St. John’s forty acres.<sup>91</sup> The appraisal report concluded that the value of the land as a city park was \$720,000, well below St. John’s asking price of \$875,000.<sup>92</sup> The appraisal detailed the existing structures and argued that three motel buildings could be utilized in the proposed park and estimated the costs for removing the other buildings.<sup>93</sup> St. John responded to the report by lowering his asking price by \$25,000.<sup>94</sup> “After a prolonged series of meetings, public discussions, and

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<sup>86</sup> Advertisement. “Twin Lakes Lodge,” date unknown.

<sup>87</sup> Photo #8563, Nevada Historical Society.

<sup>88</sup> Ownership records are complicated with a number of deeds of trusts and interest sales being recorded between 1962 and 1965 involving the Twin Lakes Corporation, Lloyd St. John, and Royal Crest, Inc.

<sup>89</sup> “Lodge Sale Petition Denied,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 4 July 1963.

<sup>90</sup> Lloyd L. St. John, “Information on Twin Lakes Lodge, September 15, 1964.

<sup>91</sup> “City Hires Arizona Expert to Appraise Twin Lakes,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 10 September 1964.

<sup>92</sup> “Twin Lakes Appraisal is Given,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 1 December 1964.

<sup>93</sup> Appraisal, 54-56.

<sup>94</sup> “Owner Trims Twin Lakes Asking Price,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 3 January 1965.

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an open air rally at the lodge itself," the mayor of Las Vegas, Oran Gragson, informed St. John that the city had no interest in buying the resort.<sup>95</sup> Some five months after the City Commission's staunch refusal to buy St. John's forty acres, the Commission voted on July 16, 1965 to purchase both the "Lower Forty" acres and St. John's property. After a series of complicated dealings, the city paid \$700,000 for the Torres/Levinson parcel and \$750,000 for St. John's land for a total of \$1,450,000 for the eighty acres.<sup>96</sup> The City Commission purchased the property to develop sixty acres into a park and planned to "hold the remaining 20 near the Tonopah Highway for later sale to commercial developers."<sup>97</sup>

**Lorenzi Park**

In August 1965, the City of Las Vegas completed the land purchase comprising Lorenzi's original eighty acres.<sup>98</sup> One of Lorenzi's daughters, Louise Lorenzi Fountain, spoke about her pleasure in the city's purchase, "I was so happy to have the City buy the Park. They have wonderful plans to rebuild it into a beautiful place for the people of Las Vegas. In years gone by the people had such wonderful times there and I would like to see it happen once again."<sup>99</sup> The high hopes Mrs. Fountain had for the city's rehabilitation of her father's oasis were soon dashed, as the city bungled management of the area and most of the buildings, including Lorenzi's house, were razed killing much of the foliage. In February of 1966 following the burning of the dance pavilion in a fire department training exercise, Florence Lee Jones bemoaned the loss in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. She wrote, "The old dance pavilion at Twin Lakes Park went up in flames last week, wiping out a landmark which has nostalgic memories for many Las Vegans and former Nevadans and the work of one of the most progressive pioneers of Las Vegas."<sup>100</sup> Soon after the purchase the city officially named the site Lorenzi Park. *Las Vegas Sun* editor, Hank Greenspun, wrote about his pleasure in the city's decision to name it Lorenzi Park, writing, "It is fitting tribute to this man that Las Vegans today and in the future will enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the park he founded and which will continue to bear his name."<sup>101</sup> The summer of 1966 saw the most scathing criticism of the city's management of Lorenzi Park. Bill Vincent wrote, "How to Ruin a City Park," for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal's* Sunday magazine, *The Nevadan*.<sup>102</sup> He detailed the way the city kept it closed from the public, the number of trees cut down, the burning of the pavilion, and the way the other structures were to be "phased out." Vincent accused city planners of beginning demolition and work before developing a plan for the park and ignoring the public in the planning process. Images showing the destruction of buildings at the park and cut trees reinforced Vincent's message. He went on to recapitulate the dissatisfaction of residents that "current plans being developed by the city would completely remove all the park's link

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<sup>95</sup> "LV Scuttles Twin Lakes Park Notion," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 18 Feb 1965.

<sup>96</sup> "City Commission Offers to Buy Land for Park," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 17 July 1965.

<sup>97</sup> "City's Two Big Land Deals," *Las Vegas Sun*, 17 July 1965.

<sup>98</sup> Document no. 650.523059, Corporation Grant, Bargain, Sale Deed, 3 August 1965 and Document no. 650.523060, Grant, Bargain, Sale Deed, 28 July 1965.

<sup>99</sup> Louise Lorenzi Fountain, interview, 13 February 1967.

<sup>100</sup> Florence Lee Jones, "Twin Lakes Pavilion, LV Landmark Destroyed," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 27 February 1966.

<sup>101</sup> Hank Greenspun, "Where I Stand," *Las Vegas Sun*, 7 March 1966.

<sup>102</sup> Bill Vincent, "How To Ruin a City Park," *The Nevadan, Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 26 June 1966.

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with the history.” An editorial in the *Review-Journal* praised the foresight in purchasing the land as “a move to prevent the kind of asphalt junglism which has enveloped other growing communities,” but that the city’s action following the purchase “belies the good sense the city demonstrated in acquiring the park.”<sup>103</sup>

The city’s plans for Lorenzi Park largely followed the recommendations found in the 1964 appraisal. Five of the motel units were kept and used for local groups, while they demolished the other structures with the curious exception of the St. John residence. By 1967, the city developed a clear plan for the park, much of which has been maintained through today. Baseball fields, handball, basketball, and tennis courts, a children’s playground, and the development of a United Nations grove of trees marked the largest developments on the grounds.<sup>104</sup> The plan also called for the two lakes to be made into one large lake while the western portion of the park “will be kept for ‘Passive Recreation’ buildings including a Senior Center, Garden Club building, Art League, and performing arts center.”<sup>105</sup>

Criticism of the city continued throughout the 1960s. A 1969 *Las Vegas Sun* article claimed that “all Las Vegans are losers” in light of the perceived poor planning done for the park.<sup>106</sup> In 1969, the city sold the twenty acres at the eastern end of the park, between Washington and Bonanza and bordering Rancho Drive for \$650,000 to developers to build a K-Mart store.<sup>107</sup> City Commissioner Phil Mirabelli pointed out the fiscal soundness of the sale and stated that between the receipt of federal funds to develop the park and the profit from the sale of the twenty acres, the city wound up “with sixty acres for nothing for a city park.”<sup>108</sup>

In 1980, the Architects’ Wives League (AWL) attempted to collect and preserve the history of Lorenzi Park. Led by Alice Rissman, the group devoted three years to the restoration and preservation of the park buildings and cleaning the lakes.<sup>109</sup> The AWL held a celebration at the park to correspond with the Diamond Jubilee of the city and honored the structures remaining from the Twin Lakes Lodge, the “three motel buildings, swimming pool, trout pond, restrooms on the west side of the lake, and two

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<sup>103</sup> “Lorenzi Park Raises City Planning Issue,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 6 July 1966.

<sup>104</sup> Elizabeth Anderson, “Lorenzi Park of the Future,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 12 February 1967.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> “Join the Sun and Revisit Twin Lakes... Now Lorenzi Park,” *Las Vegas Sun*, 29 June 1969.

<sup>107</sup> Ray Leydecker, “City Sells Part of Lorenzi Park,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 20 February 1969.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Mark Dent, “Women’s group seeks to return Lorenzi Park to better days,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 12 October 1980.

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buildings on the north side of the lake.”<sup>110</sup> Part of the celebration included Governor Robert List dedicating a plaque honoring the remaining buildings as “historically significant and emblematic of Old Las Vegas.”<sup>111</sup>

The park’s landscape changed once again in 1982, when a new building was constructed in the southwest corner of the park, near the location of Lorenzi’s original grapevine, to house the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society.<sup>112</sup> County health officials forced the closure of the pool in 1986.<sup>113</sup> A rededication ceremony in 1990 celebrated improvements made to Lorenzi Park by the city of Las Vegas. The city drained and cleaned the lake, installed a new filtration system, built new picnic areas, constructed a new parking area, and installed a walking path.<sup>114</sup> On the site of the pool, the city built the Sammy Davis Jr. Festival Plaza amphitheatre in 1992.<sup>115</sup> The last major loss of history at Lorenzi Park came in 1999, when the city removed part of the old fishpond to provide additional parking for the services housed in the old motel buildings.<sup>116</sup>

The Pioneer Trail, developed as part of the Centennial celebration for Las Vegas in 2005, winds past Lorenzi Park and a new sign invites visitors to explore the history inside the park. The long history of Lorenzi Park offers an important lens onto the larger history of southern Nevada and the draw of water and the enduring importance of tourism to the city. The lakes and the remaining motel structures skillfully illustrate these twin trajectories in Las Vegas’ past.

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<sup>110</sup> “Twin Lakes Lodge, Lorenzi Park Historic Marker Ceremony,” Pamphlet. 12 October 1980.

<sup>111</sup> “Park Buildings Dedicated,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 22 October 1980.

<sup>112</sup> Millman.

<sup>113</sup> “Ground-Breaking Set for New Sammy Davis amphitheater,” 14 July 1991, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

<sup>114</sup> “City of Las Vegas Rededication Ceremony, Lorenzi Park, May 12, 1990.

<sup>115</sup> Ken White, “City Honors Sammy Davis Jr.,” 23 October 1992, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

<sup>116</sup> Kimberly McGee, “Make the Past Last,” 18 February 1999, *Las Vegas Sun*.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Lorenzi park property boundaries include Washington Avenue along the north, Twin Lakes Drive on the west, the western limit of K-Las Vegas commercial development on the east (approximately 670 feet west of Belrose Street), and the rear (north) property line of the residential development along Avalon Avenue on the south. These include all lands associated with Clark County Assessor's Parcel Number 139-29-301-003.

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**Boundary Justification**

The area selected includes the entire Lorenzi Park property as defined by legal boundaries. The park property includes all lands associated with Clark County Assessor's Parcel Number 139-29-301-003.

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Section Additional Documentation

Page 1

**Sketch map/Aerial**



**Legend**

- |  |  |                               |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Motel building                          | 8. Stair ruins                           | 15. Nevada Garden Club Center |
| 2. Motel building                          | 9. Lorenzi Lake                          | 16. Water tank                |
| 3. Motel building                          | 10. North Island                         | 17. Shed                      |
| 4. Motel building                          | 11. South Island                         | 18. Picnic pavilion           |
| 5. St. John residence                      | 12. Fountain/creek                       | 19. Rose Garden               |
| 6. Garage/storage/restrooms<br>(boathouse) | 13. Nevada State Museum                  | 20. Garden                    |
| 7. Fountain                                | 14. Sammy Davis Jr. Festival<br>Pavilion | 21. Dog Run                   |

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USGS Map with UTM Coordinates



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Lorenzi Park  
Clark County, Nevada  
Carrisa King, Photographer  
April 25, 2007

1. Motel building (#1), view from south end.
2. Motel building (#2), view from southwest.
3. North end of motel building (#3), east end of motel building (#2).
4. Profile view of motel building (#3).
5. Porch view of motel building (#3).
6. Railroad tie porch posts, motel building (#4).
7. Rear view of motel building (#4).
8. Front view (north side) of St. John residence (#5).
9. South, lake-facing side of residence (#5).
10. Planter and walled-in carport area (east end of residence #5).
11. Stone fireplace in living room, residence (#5).
12. Living room view, residence (#5).
13. Kitchen cabinets, residence (#5).
14. Garage and storage (original boathouse) (#6).
15. Restrooms at garage/storage building (#6).
16. Eave detail at garage/storage building (#6).
17. Sandstone and concrete stair ruins, view from west (#7).
18. Fountain ruins, view from east (#8).
19. Current view of Lorenzi Lake (#9) and North Island (#10) from north end of lake.
20. Eastern view of North Island (#10).



1. Motel building (#1), view from south end.



2. Motel

building (#2), view from southwest.



3. North end of motel building (#3), east end of motel building (#2).



4. Profile view of motel building (#3).





5. Porch view of motel building (#3).



6. Railroad tie porch posts, motel building (#4).



7. Rear view of motel building (#4).



8. Front view (north side) of St. John residence (#5).





9. South, lake-facing side of residence (#5).



10. Planter and walled-in carport, (east end of residence #5).



11. Stone fireplace in living room, residence (#5).



12. Living room view, residence (#5).





13. Kitchen cabinets, residence (#5)



14. Garage and storage (original boathouse) (#6).





15. Restrooms at garage/storage building (#6).



16. Eave detail at garage/storage building (#6).



17. Sandstone and concrete stair ruins, view from west (#7).



18. Fountain ruins, view from east (#8).





19. Current view of Lorenzi Lake (#9) and North Island (#10) from north end of the Lake.



20. Eastern view of North Island (#10).

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Section Additional Documentation-Historic Documents Page 1

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**Historic Materials**

**Photos**

1. Twin Lakes Gate
2. Aerial shot of Twin Lakes and surrounding area
3. Image of the motel
4. Visitors to Twin Lakes on horseback
5. Image of typical motel building from 1964 appraisal

**Floor Plans**

**Maps**

- 1964 map of Twin Lakes
- 1977 map of Lorenzi Park by the City of Las Vegas

**Miscellaneous**

- Advertisement from 1932
- Itinerary for visitors in 1961



Twin Lakes gate.  
Faced Tonopah Highway (today's Rancho Drive).  
Used with permission of Nevada State Museum.



Aerial image of Twin Lakes.  
Used with permission of Nevada State Museum.





Interior of motel room.  
Used with permission of Nevada State Museum.

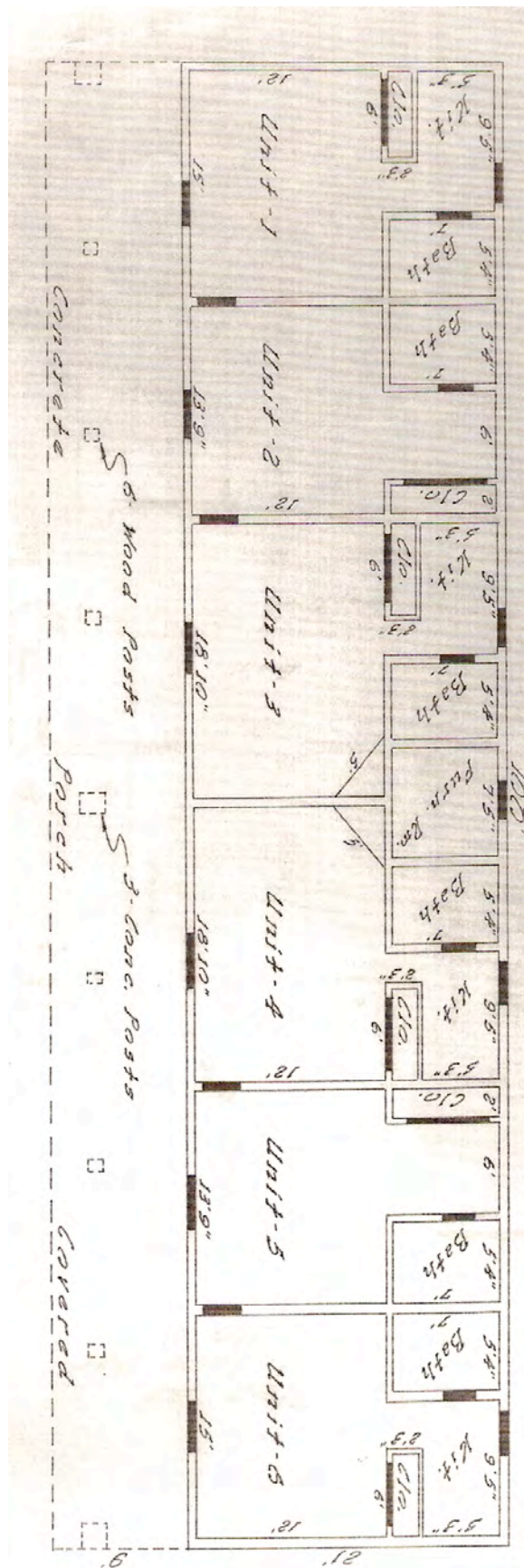


Visitors to Twin Lakes on horses.  
Used with permission of Nevada State Museum.

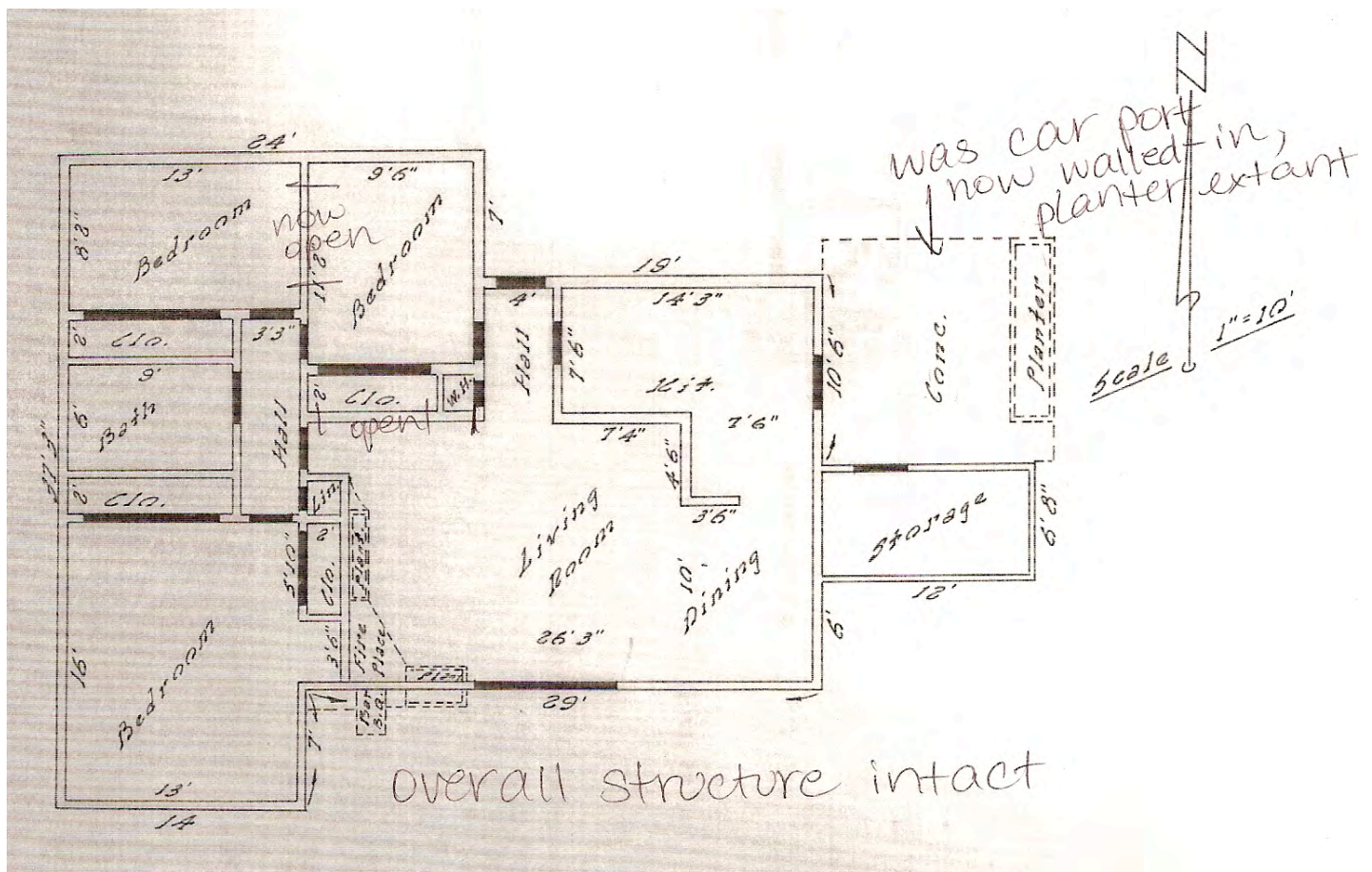




Image of typical motel room.  
From 1964 appraisal.

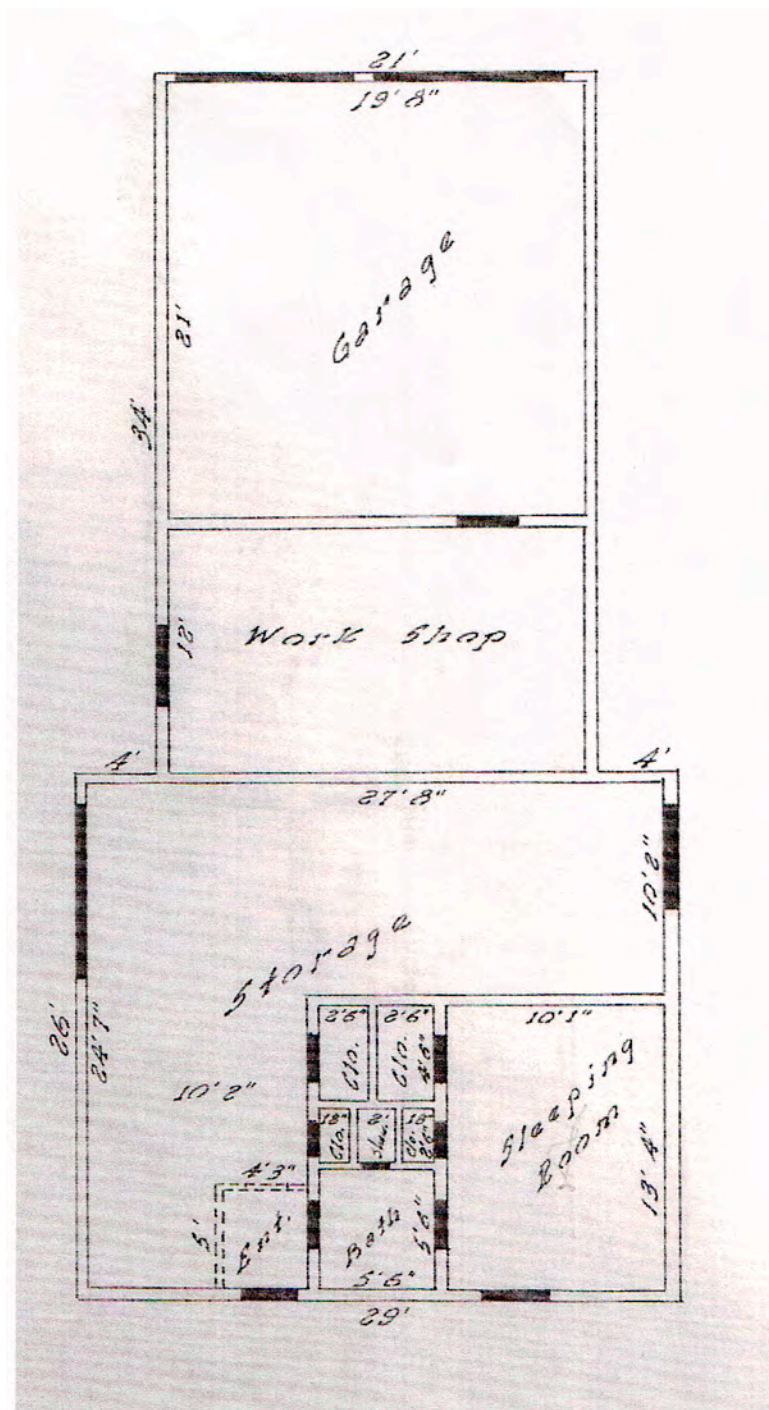


Floor Plan of motel buildings 2, 3, and 4.  
Before alterations.

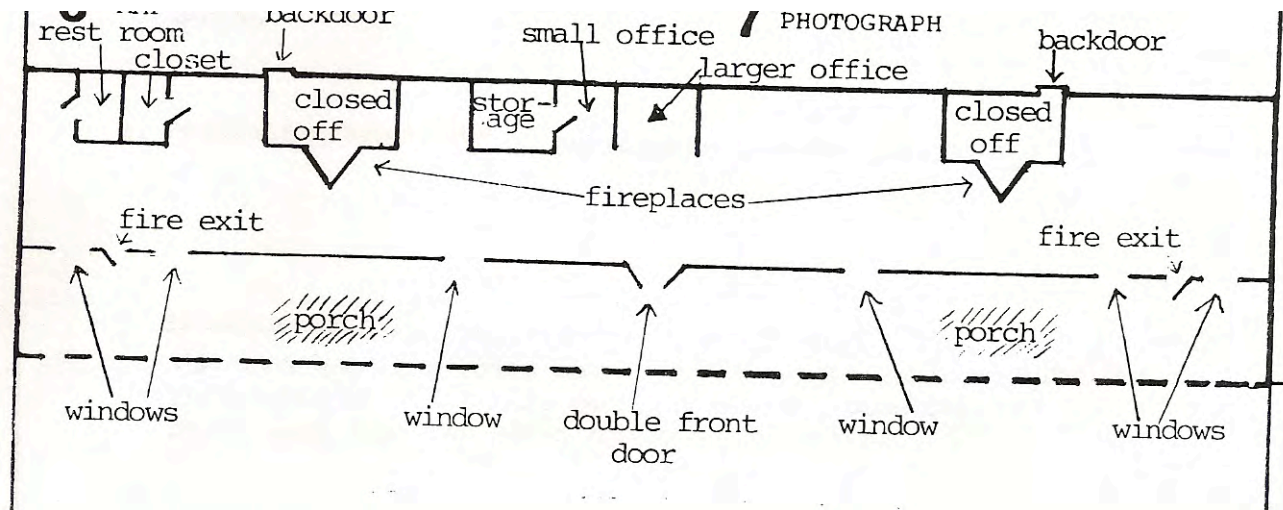


Floor plan of building #5:  
St. John residence before alterations.  
1964 appraisal.



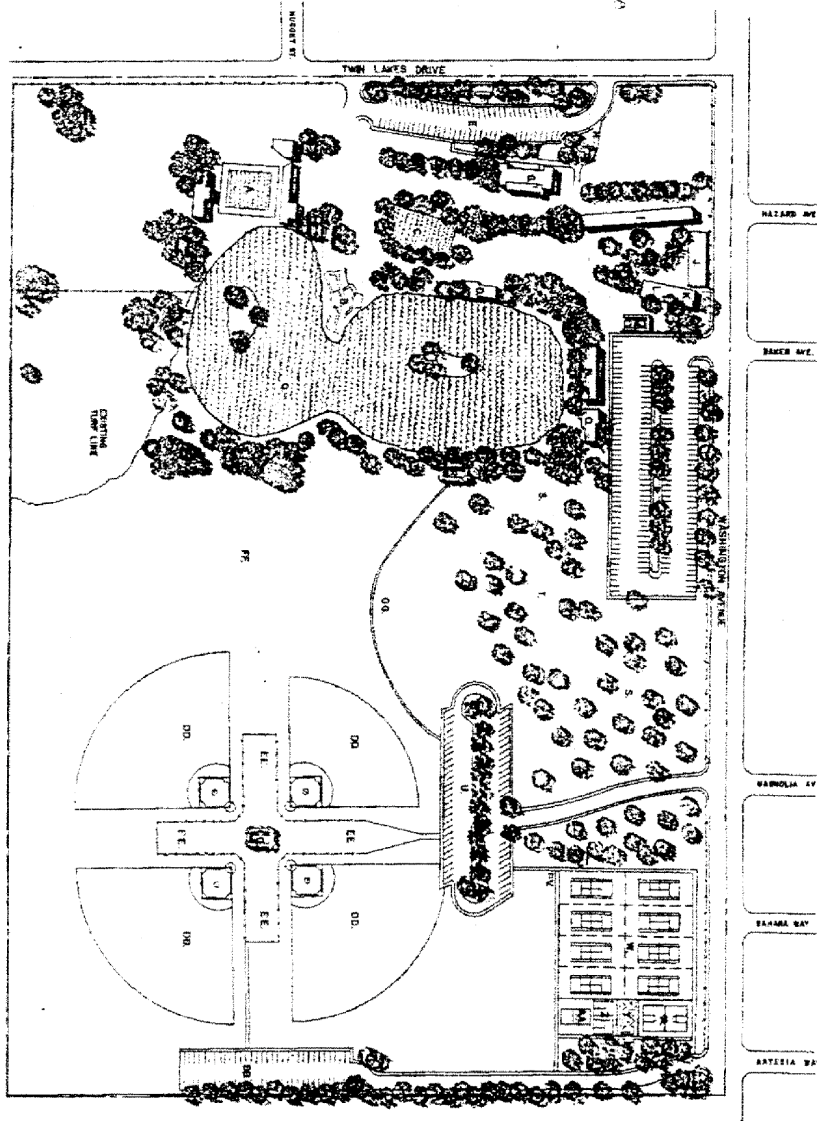


Building #6.  
1964 appraisal.



Motel building #1, following alterations by Las Vegas Art Museum.  
Site Evaluation, 1980.





**EXISTING FACILITIES:**

- [illegible]

**EXTINGUISHING LANDSCAPING**

CITY OF LAS VEGAS NEVADA  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**DOM A. SAYLOR, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING**

LORENZI      PARK  
MASTER      PLAN

[illegible]

650-13-96

8/25/77

Lorenzi Park map.  
City of Las Vegas 1977.



**GRAND OPENING**  
Of The  
**1932 SWIMMING SEASON**  
OF  
**LORENZI LAKE PARK**

HALF MILE TO LEFT OF TONOPAH HIGHWAY

**TOMORROW MAY 15, 1932**

You Owe it to yourself to drive out and take a nice cool dip in  
Nevada's Finest, Largest and Most Sanitary Swimming Pool.

WATER CHANGES  
CONTINUOUSLY

TEMPERATURE  
OF 74½ DEGREES

BIG WATER CARNIVAL

AQUAPLANING

MOTOR BOATING

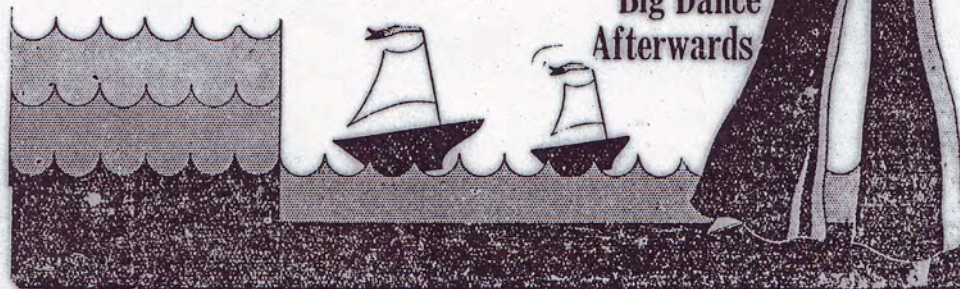
**SPECIAL ATTRACTION TONIGHT**

**STARTING 8:30 P. M.**  
**BIG WATER CARNIVAL**

ENDING WITH  
**FIERY HIGH DIVE**

**FREE TO SPECTATORS**

Big Dance  
Afterwards



**S  
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Advertisement: *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal.*  
14 May 1932.



80 acres of  
vacation pleasure  
for all the family  
— just 5 minutes  
west of Las Vegas  
on Highway 95

# TWIN LAKES LODGE

"The Oasis of Las Vegas"

NEVADA'S ALL YEAR DUDE RANCH

BOX 1589

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

New Phone CR 8-0000  
DIAL DUDLEY 2-3722

GENTLEMEN OF THE TWA 1961 PRESS JUNKET:

We again welcome you to Twin Lakes Lodge for a ranch breakfast and a rip-roaring Western rodeo on your Las Vegas visit.

Date: January 21st

Time: Transportation will be provided from  
your hotel to the Lodge at 11:00 a.m.

Wagonmaster St. John and his assistants will welcome you at the Cabana Fireside Bar with the usual morning stimulants that will develop a good appetite. Besides the Bloody Marys and Screwdrivers there will be the famous Twin Lakes Ramos Fizzes for your testing. No Host Bar. Trout fishing will be available for the sportsmen. At 12 noon Camp Chef Don Willson will ring the gong for your ranch breakfast of:

Tomato Juice  
Pan Fried Boned Idaho Rainbow Trout  
Scrambled Eggs with diced ham and fresh tomatoes  
Hash Brown Potatoes  
Man-sized Flapjacks with Loganberry Syrup  
Blueberry and Date Muffins  
Camp Coffee

At 1:15 p.m., Ranch Foreman Dick St. John will start the rodeo at the Arena. Your program will include the following events:

Bareback Brahma Bull Riding  
Bareback Bronc Riding  
Calf Roping  
Team Roping  
Bulldogging  
Mad Scramble Pig Race  
Ladies Barrel Race

We at Twin Lakes Lodge again join in welcoming you to Las Vegas and hope you have a wonderful outing.

Sincerely,

TWIN LAKES LODGE

*Lloyd L. St. John*  
Lloyd L. St. John